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Gender differences in workload and self-perceived burnout in a multinational company from Bucharest

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to test whether gender differences exist in terms of workload and burnout in a multinational company. Questionnaires were completed by 40 participants, employees in a multinational company in Bucharest. The results show that there is a positive relationship between workload and burnout. There are also significant differences between women and men in workload and burnout which means women are characterized by significantly higher levels of burnout and workload than men.

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1. Theoretical framework

One of the most common problems in organizations today is burnout. "A dysfunctional phenomenon, caused by stress, but not limited to, fatigue is seen as a reaction of the body to rehabilitate and restore its functions after intense and repeated requests from the body's energy consumption. In general, fatigue is a reversible phenomenon, because after a period of rest, the body restores its normal operating capacity. This is the feature that makes it different from overwork, an irreversible form of fatigue which requires medical treatment for recovery" (Bogathy, 2004, p. 184).

We can classify fatigue in different ways, such as muscle fatigue (caused by exercise), sensorineural fatigue (caused by tension of analyzers), mental fatigue (caused by psychological factors) (Enache, 2003 apud. Bogathy, 2004). Since the 90s, with increased globalization, employees are more subjected to stressful situations, given the changes that occur and lead to increased job insecurity and work overload" (Bogathy, 2004). Broadbridge believed

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that (2002, as cited. Bogathy, 2004), the most affected organizations in terms of stress are those organizations that have the object of providing services and those undergoing major technological changes (Bogathy, 2004).

The concept of stress was introduced into scientific circulation by Hans Selye (1946, as cited. Popa, 2008, p. 233); analyzing the phenomenon of adaptation to stress of the body, Selye identified three stages of a process he called the general adaptation syndrome to stress: the alarm reaction, which occurs in the initial contact with the applicant factor, resistance, ensuring the balance between application and situation and depletion, which then points to the adjustment mechanisms that are exceeded (Popa, 2008; Karatepe & Osman, 2013). One of the most important predictors of burnout and occupational stress is loading workload. "Essentially, we can define the request as a ratio between supply and demand, where demand is required by the task resources and offer by individual resources available. The latter dose not only has a stable character, but also a dynamic one, depending on how individuals manage their potential.

Thus, after a sleepless night, even the most capable operator will make an effort to perform tasks that under normal conditions would not create any problems. Any stress is essentially a form of request. In everyday life, however, stress is associated with a personal or emotional solicitation of excessive significance, most often negative but sometimes positive. A chess player in the middle of a game was feels a degree of solicitation, if the examination room is noisy or too hot, thus he will feel stressed. In conclusion, we understand stress as a personal subjective experience, lived as a threat or an emotional or psychological discomfort, while the request is an experience characterized mainly by the amount of physical or mental engagement in a task, without neglecting the emotional aspects associated to effort (Popa, 2008, p. 236).

Studies have been conducted on people diagnosed with burnout. Schaufeli and his collaborators (2001, as cited. Popa, 2008) analyzed a sample of employees in the Netherlands where it resulted that about 250,000 people in the Dutch population suffer from this syndrome. In various medical professions, burnout occurs mainly among occupational doctors, psychiatrists, teachers, general practitioners and social workers. A smaller number was recorded among people in public policy, such as police officers, officers of correctional system, while among workers in hospices, burnout syndrome occurs in 2% of them (Popa, 2008; Li & Li, 2011).

In a similar study conducted in Norway, Richardsen and Martinussen (2002, as cited. Popa 2008) followed the intensity of burnout symptoms in traffic controllers compared to other professions, such as journalists, police officers, builders, by assessing three defining indicators of burnout: exhaustion, cynicism and efficiency. Results placed journalists first in terms of exhaustion and cynicism while efficiency was rated at levels comparable for all occupational groups. The study found significant relationships, although dimmed with age, but did not reveal differences between men and women in terms of symptom intensity (Popa, 2008).

2. Objective and Hypotheses

2.1. Objectives

The main objective of this research is to explore gender differences in terms of overload at work, workload and relationship.

The secondary objectives of this study are:

- Highlighting gender differences in terms of overload.
- Highlighting gender differences in terms of workload.
- Highlighting the relationship between strain and workload.

2.2. Hypotheses

- There are significant differences between p female and male participants regarding overload.
- There are significant differences between female and male participants regarding workload.
- There is a significant relationship between work overload and workload.

3. Method

3.1. Participants

The research involved 40 participants, 18 men and 22 women employees of a multinational company in Bucharest, aged between 20 and 30 years.

3.2. Instruments

The instruments used for data collection were: Burnout Questionnaire (Elena Ionitǎ) and Workload Questionnaire (Elena Ionitǎ). The Burnout Questionnaire includes 20 items and the Workload Questionnaire contains 15 items. The two questionnaires are measured in 5 levels Lickert scale from 1- rarely up to 5 very frequently. The burnout questionnaire includes 20 items that refer to activities undertaken in the workplace or outside it, by employees of the company.

This includes items such as "I feel tired when I wake up in the morning and have to go to work", "I frequent have headaches" "I've reached my limit", "I frequent have muscle aches," "I feel depressed ", "When I think about my concerns I feel tense and nervous ", " From early morning I feel exhausted, define the lack of necessary power to carry out the activity in normal conditions caused by excessive stress.

The Workload questionnaire contains items such as: "I take work home to complete my tasks", "I work during breaks", "I never leave at the end of the program", "During holidays I write/receive emails about work", "I work during holidays ", "I write emails on my lunch break ", "I speak on the phone to continue my duties after I finished work " can show how much workload one undertakes outside the program.

3.3. Procedure

The questionnaires were applied to employees in the workplace. The staff was informed of the details of research and was made aware of obtaining informed consent. Also, they were told that participation is not mandatory and will not have problems with superiors if they wish to participate in this research. Also, it was specified that if they wish to attend, they should be sincere and serious. The questionnaire was partially anonymous, as they were asked only for initials, and the remaining data did not put participants in an embarrassing situation (their gender and age).Also, participants were informed about the confidentiality of data and that such data and information will be used only for research purposes. The questionnaires were applied over a week since participants work in shifts and in stores from different locations. It took seven days to apply to each participant both questionnaires.

4. Results

Table 1. Pearson correlations between study variables

		burnout	incarcare_sarcina	varsta
Burnout	Pearson Correlation	1	,314*	,026
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,048	,873
	N	40	40	40
incarcare_sarcina	Pearson Correlation	,314*	1	,112
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,048		,491
	N	40	40	40
Varsta	Pearson Correlation	,026	,112	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,873	,491	
	N	40	40	40

In this table, where Pearson correlation was applied, it is observed that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between burnout and workload ($r = .31$, $p < .005$), so the hypothesis that there is a relationship between burnout and workload is confirmed.

Table 2. Mean and Sums of Rank for study variables

	gen	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Burnout	1,00	18	16,17	291,00
	2,00	22	24,05	529,00
	Total	40		
incarcare_sarcina	1,00	18	13,67	246,00
	2,00	22	26,09	574,00
	Total	40		

Table 3. Results of Man Whitney U test

	burnout	incarcare_sarcina
Mann-Whitney U	120,000	75,000
Wilcoxon W	291,000	246,000
Z	-2,127	-3,363
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	,033	,001
Exact Sig. [2*(1-tailed Sig.)]	,034 ^a	,001 ^a

In Table 7, where the nonparametric test was applied for differences according to Mann Whitney U ranks, it appears that there are significant differences between women and men regarding the burnout variable ($U = 120$, $M1 = 16.17$, $M2 = 24$, $p. < .005$) (hypothesis is confirmed) for variable workload where women obtained higher scores than men on this variable and the previous one (burnout) (hypothesis is confirmed) ($U = 75$, $M1 = 13.67$, $M2 = 26$, $p. < .005$).

Hence all three hypotheses are confirmed, ie:

11. There are significant differences between female and male participants regarding overload (women obtained higher scores than men, meaning that women work more overloaded than men).

12. There are significant differences between female and male participants regarding workload (women obtained higher scores than men, meaning that women have higher levels of workload then men charging).

13. There is a significant relationship between overload and workload.

5. Conclusions

This study's main objective was to explore gender differences regarding overload and workload and the relationship between these two dimensions. The present research confirmed all three hypotheses, which allows the assessment that both the primary objective and secondary objectives were achieved. The point from which we started this study was to identify gender differences in terms of overload and workload. After observing and collecting the data from employees of the multinational company, we wanted to research how they are overloaded at work. As presented in this research, several studies were conducted on burnout, mainly in order to see how this could be diminished.

Some of them were conducted on performance evaluation after workload or how this is being felt among family members. There have been studies on the professional-personal lives report, and also studies on contract termination as a result of not achieving performance at work and low productivity. The results of this research showed that women have higher levels of workload than men and higher levels of overload also, there being a significant relationship between these two dimensions, overload and workload, resulting one from the other.

It is noted that the research was conducted on a sample of 40 persons, of which 18 were male and 22 female. Studies also show that more information is needed on this issue, so as to improve the report between professional-

personal life. As an example, we can take the study presented in the present study, namely "Examination of a chain of relationships survivors of layoffs due to overload and work-life balance" (Malik, Muhammad Imran; Hussain, Saddam; Mahmood Asif, 2011). The burnout syndrome is a widespread phenomenon in today's society. It may seem beneficial in the short term, but long term becomes counter-productive because it reduces creativity, and leads to fatigue. We risk to consume energy, because most of it is dedicated to others, not taking account of themselves thus leading to a imbalance between professional- personal life.

Experts propose solutions to improve the quality of personal life, such as restoring the balance between work and personal life, prioritize tasks with greater attention to devoting a long rest and meditation, which provides physical and mental health of the individual.

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